



TOWN OF WARE

Planning & Community Development

126 Main Street, Ware, Massachusetts 01082

t. 413.967.9648 ext. 120

Planning Board

Meeting Minutes from

Thursday, November 4th, 2021

Select Board Room, Town Hall

Planning Board Members Present:

Josh Kusnierz (Chairman), Rick Starodoj (Vice-Chairman), Ed Murphy (Remote), Ken Crosby (Remote), Joe Knight (Remote) Elizabeth Hancock (Alternate)

Staff Present:

Rob Watchilla, PCD Director
Anna Marques, Building Commissioner

Public in Attendance:

Ronald DiFelice, Jeremy Chapman, Elio Qorri, Jim Kadra, Phillip Warbasse, Alex Bergeron, George Staiti, Carol Zin, Shannon McGuigan, Steve Pikul, Vance Chatel

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman J. Kusnierz called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

J. Kusnierz read a message regarding the Open Meeting Law, and the importance of observing this for all board or committee members. Discussing the unit under the Attorney General's Office call the Open Meeting Law Division, which is establishes penalties for neglecting to abide by the Open Meeting Law.

ADMINISTRATIVE

Elizabeth Hancock recuses herself as a board member due to a conflict of interest, being an abutter.

- E. Hancock states that there is a missing name of Karen Hubacs who works for Bond Construction Corp. Leading to a paragraph which reads like a fact, when it was a statement made by K. Hubacs to Planning Board member Ken Crosby. E. Hancock requests to add the statement made by K. Hubacs regarding the project phase 1 was completed and that she claimed the original permit was claimed by the USDA. E. Hancock suggest that the original file was not a legitimate application.

Joe Knight recuses himself as a board member due to conflict of interest, being the Special Permit being the owner of the property where the project is taking place.

- J. Knight wanted clarification on the phasing timeline, it was suggested by the board that phase two should have a timeline of six months, where the minutes state phase three. J. Knights requests this edit to be made to the minutes.

Chairman Kusnierz invites E. Hancock back to the meeting as a Planning Board Alternate and J. Knight as board member at 7:11 p.m.

Motion by J. Kusnierz to table approval of minutes from Oct 21st for next meeting. Seconded by K. Crosby.
Roll Call Vote:

Josh Kusnierz	Aye
Rick Starodoj	Aye
Ken Crosby	Aye
Ed Murphy	Aye
Joe Knight	Aye

All in favor. Approved 5/0/0

Old Business

- Release of Covenant: Maple Shade Development (Continued Discussion)
 - Request for release of covenant for parcel # 6-11-33 (1 Bel Air Drive) in Bel Air Estates.

Planning board suggests that deposits should be released upfront for the completion of the roadway. R. Starodoj questions how the board can secure the money from the sales of the lots to be used for the roads. K.Crosby mentions his concern with the detention basin and his concerns for build out of the five lots in the subdivision.

Maple Shade Development will assess the situation and get back to the planning board at a future meeting.

New Business

- Bird Hill Farm Bed and Breakfast (B&B)
 - Discussion with the Planning Board regarding whether it can host wedding venues on the premises.

Vance Chatel, owner of Bird Hill Farms stated to the planning board that he wished to have small intimate weddings with around 60 people or so attendance on his farm to supplement his B&B business. Vance has had one wedding already on his premises and wants to continue to do so. Town zoning allows for him to have up to ten rooms with his B&B business, most of the event goers parked on the site, with one care parking on the street. R. Starodoj stated that he would suggest having more off-street parking so that it doesn't impede traffic.

Anna Marques stated that there was one neighbor who called to inquire if it was permissible to have a wedding on the site, it was not a formal complaint. E. Hancock stated that the original special permit in October 2015 did not have specific language that included outside venues such as weddings.

Planning Board members suggested that Mr. Chatel have an modification to the special permit, through another public hearing process so that the conditions are updated for the business in all intended operations.

Information Session on Battery Storage (Bertin Engineering) @ 7:40 p.m.

- Bertin Engineering and their consultants are offering members of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals an hour-long training course on solar battery storage.

Ron DiFelice, Ph.D., a managing partner in Energy Intelligence Partners presented background on Lithium-Ion batteries and battery storage safety. Explained the importance of energy storage for the future of carbon emissions. Stated that the advancement of technological and safety standards for battery storage comes from electric vehicles.

R. DiFelice discussed the recent developments in battery safety including design, detection, ventilation and suppression. He explained the chemistry behind the types of lithium-ion batteries and the build out of each component. He discussed mitigating the risks of battery storage including manufacturing defects, human error, poor operational environmental conditions and various abuses to the systems.

Board members asked R. DiFelice questions regarding the availability for lithium-ion battery recycling at their end-of-life cycle.

R. Starodoj asked about the process for fire safety, and the use of water as the main source to combat spreading.

E. Hancock asked about the location of the battery storage sites, wondering if they would be more conducive to be enclosed within buildings, or stand-alone storage facilities outdoors. R. DiFelice responded by informing the board that outdoor installation was the most cost effective and safe practice.

E. Hancock asked if all solar projects would require storage at some point. Jeremy Chapman informed the board that the SMART incentive requires battery storage for 500KW system. Existing solar PV systems will not be required to add storage, but J. Chapman stated that many projects would benefit from adding storage due to state and federal incentive programs.

E. Hancock asked if the firefighter department would require any additional training for battery storage safety or any expansion to the fire department. R. DiFelice suggested that this would not be necessary.

K. Crosby asked in relation to the cost of a solar project construction, what percentage of development costs will be decommissioned after the batteries are ready to be retired. J. Chapman answered that he does not have an exact answer for cost of decommission, and stated that he would follow up with the Planning Director via email or phone.

R. Starodoj states that the Zoning Use Table needs to be addressed so that solar storage facilities aren't located in undesired locations.

E. Hancock asked if the storage facilities are usually located near the solar P.V. sites, J. Chapman responded in saying the grid is transitioning from fossil fuel to renewables. Therefore, most storage only projects don't need as large as a solar P.V. and storage system combined.

R. DiFelice stated that a typical size for stand-alone storage project footprint is around an acre, and that it makes the most sense economically to be located near a substation.

J. Chapman stated that the Clean Peak Standard is geared toward mitigating the high user demand times of the grid by establishing a larger energy storage capacity.

E. Hancock asked if energy storage systems give off any loud noises, and if there is a humming sound associated with their operations. R. DiFelice responded that they make noise, similar to industrial electrical systems. He stated that he could provide a decibel level for a reference.

Elio Qorri from Bertin Engineering stated that they have a report for the decibel level, the noise generated by the storage containers was roughly around 79 decibels. This report was provided in 2019. In comparison 79 decibels is similar to a household vacuum.

George Staiti stated that he would prefer that this recommendation for battery storage stay at the planning board level and not go to town meeting, due to residents which may have a bias or are miss informed on the matter.

Town Planner Update

Rob Watchilla introduced the new assistant, Alex Ziter for the planning department to the planning board members. R. Watchilla discussed the Right to Farm Survey and updated the board on its status and ongoing process.

Motion to close the meeting at 8:42 P.M by R. Starodoj. Seconded by J. Knight
Roll Call Vote:

Josh Kusnierz	Aye
Rick Starodoj	Aye
Ken Crosby	Aye
Ed Murphy	Aye
Joe Knight	Aye

All in favor. Approved 5/0/0

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 18th, 2021 at 7 pm.

Minutes from November 4, 2021

Respectfully submitted by,

Alex Ziter,
Planning Assistant,
Planning & Community Development

Minutes Approved on: 12/2/21

Kusnierz	_____
Starodoj	_____
Knight	_____
Murphy	_____
Crosby	_____